

review

LAY LADY LAY

A NIGHT WITH DYLAN

by Pamela Michael



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In the posh world of five-star hotels, guests expect a certain level of cosseting and proficiency for their money. The best hotels have made a science of hospitality; they purr with a fine-tuned efficiency that promises comfort and ease. They offer a welcome oasis for weary travelers who arrive battered by the fiendish beast of 21st century air travel. The measure of a truly great hotel, however, is not in the quotidian tasks, no matter how elegantly performed, but in the way the staff responds to the unexpected.

The designer-garbed “Welcome Team” at Dylan, Dublin’s swanky new hotel, was put to the test in a big way (and passed with grace and aplomb) when the six Wild Writing Women arrived in a rainstorm to find that we had only one reservation. Without rustling one designer feather, Rooms Manager Simon Cunnich calmly ushered us into the hotel’s wildly colorful Dylanbar for drinks while he sorted things out. A couple of

complimentary Kir Royales later, we were escorted to our individual rooms, where our respective luggage was waiting.



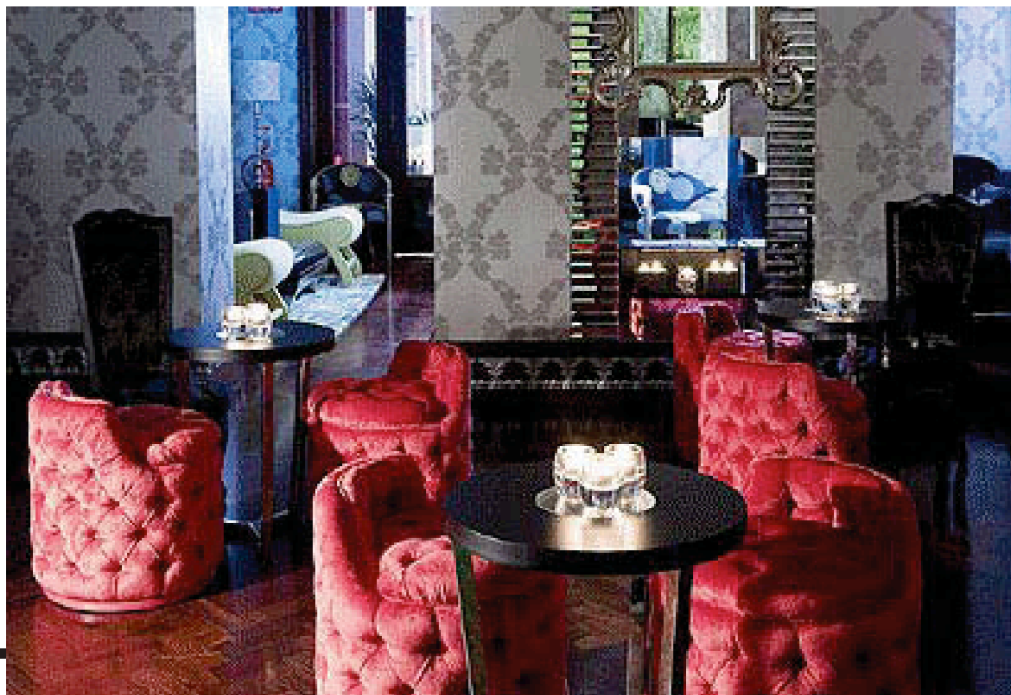
And what rooms they were! Massive antique beds with Frette linens. Plasma TVs. iPods. (The MP3 players come loaded with Dylan’s mix of songs. You can use them in the speaker base or take them with you as you go about Dublin.) More high tech wonders included a Bang & Olufsen phone that I at first thought was a space age vibrator of some sort. (Now that’s service, I thought! Hotels take note.) The mini-bar offered,



in addition to high-end beverages and snacks, a disposable camera, a copy of the Kama Sutra and an intimacy kit, details of which I will leave to the imagination.

Dylan's bathrooms are huge; most feature both a full-sized tub and separate shower. The tile floors are heated and the fancy Italian

Etro toiletries come in full-size containers. All 44 rooms in the Victorian-era hotel—formerly the old Royal Hospital Nurses Home—are unique. Some are ultra modern, some whimsical; many feature Belleek pottery, Ireland's pride. All are extravagantly yet tastefully done, as one would



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In addition to the hotel's bold and stylish décor, much attention has been paid to service and amenities in this intimate four-story gem. The facility includes a cozy library, terraces for social and business gatherings, a meeting room and a full range of business services for the corporate traveler, as well as 24-hour desk and room service. The hotel's restaurant, Still, is one of Dublin's finest eateries.

Dylan is located in the leafy, tony Ballsbridge neighborhood (home to many embassies) just south of the City Centre, and close to shoppers' heaven Grafton Street, entertainment and dining destination Baggot Street, and St. Stephen's Green. Room rates are definitely in the "splurge" category, beginning at \$515 a night.



The crackerjack multilingual staff had another opportunity to demonstrate Dylan's extraordinary level of service when we checked out the next day, some of us heading back to the States, others off to various European destinations. Just as her taxi to the airport arrived, Jacqueline discovered her leather jacket hadn't been brought up to the room the night before with the rest of her things. We had earlier marveled at how the bellmen figured out which suitcase went to which room; we'd left everything in a huge wet pile in the lobby when we arrived, repairing to the bar for cocktails while the staff found rooms for us.

As the taxi waited, quick phone calls to the other Wild Writing Women determined that the jacket hadn't been put in one of our rooms by mistake. Jacqueline was frantic, the taxi driver anxious to leave; an undercurrent of bellman malfeasance was beginning to emerge as Jacqueline struggled to grasp what might have happened to her favorite jacket. In the background, more phone calls were being made, staffers dispatched to check various places.

Just when it seemed certain that the jacket was indeed gone for good, and Jacqueline about to

burst into tears, the manager had one last idea. He excused himself and ran off down the hallway, emerging a few minutes later with a sealed plastic bag, a note taped to the outside.

"I remembered you'd gone into the bar just after arriving and thought you might have been wearing the jacket," he announced, beaming. "You must have taken it off and perhaps it slipped onto the floor. The bar staff had it in their lost and found."

Five stars. Bright shiny ones.

